

Author of apartheid paedophile expose found dead in South Africa

AFP |

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South African author Mark Minnie was found dead weeks after the book, *The Lost Boys of Bird Island*, was published. (Twitter pic)

JOHANNESBURG: A South African author of a new book exposing an alleged paedophile ring involving top-ranking apartheid-era cabinet members has been found dead in an apparent suicide case, police said Tuesday.

Mark Minnie, 58, was found on Monday night at a friend's farm in Eastern Cape province with a gunshot wound to his head just weeks after the book, *The Lost Boys of Bird Island*, was published.

“We did find a suicide note,” police spokeswoman Priscilla Naidu, told AFP on the phone from the southern city of Port Elizabeth. “A firearm was found lying next to him.”

Police said no foul play was suspected but that an investigation had been launched.

Minnie, a former police officer who was working as a teacher in China, had been in South Africa for the launch of the book he co-authored with investigative journalist Chris Steyn.

The book, published early this month, chronicles allegations that former defence minister Magnus Malan was part of a paedophile network that operated during white-minority rule in the 1980s.

In the book, Malan, three other ministers and a businessman, allegedly abducted or picked up teenage boys and airlifted them in military helicopters to Bird Island, a nature reserve off the coast of Port Elizabeth, to be sexually abused.

As defence minister, Malan — who died in 2011 — was the second most powerful figure of the apartheid regime after president P.W. Botha.

NB Publishers tweeted that it was “shocked and saddened” to hear of Minnie’s death, which was confirmed by his family.

“He was passionate about his work, as a policeman, teacher and writer,” said the publishers.

Local media reported that Minnie and Steyn had received death threats following the publication of the book.

One of the former cabinet ministers, who the writers did not name, is still alive.